IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus comprising:

a first contacting unit including a positioning member that contacts ~~which is contacted with respect to~~ an image carrier and exerts a force on the image carrier in a ~~along a predetermined weight~~ direction that is normal to the first contacting unit and the image carrier; and

a second contacting unit that contacts ~~which is contacted with respect to~~ the image carrier in a wrap shape, wherein

the ~~predetermined weight~~ normal direction ~~by the first contacting unit is intersected with~~ intersects the wrap-shaped contact range ~~by the second contacting unit~~.

2. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein

the second contacting unit is provided on the downstream side of a pivotal rotation direction of the image carrier with respect to the first contacting unit.

3. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein

the first contacting unit is a member capable of maintaining a distance between the image carrier and a developing agent carrier for developing a latent image formed on the image carrier.

4. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the first contacting unit is provided in a developing device in which a plurality of the developing agent carriers are provided on a circumference thereof, and the positioning member is a tracking member capable of maintaining the distance between a specific developing agent carrier and the image carrier when the developing device is pivotally rotated and thus the specific developing agent carrier is located opposite to the image carrier.

5. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the second contacting unit is an elastic belt which is followed by receiving driving force produced from the image carrier.

6. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the second contacting unit is contacted to the image carrier under predetermined depression force.

7. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the second contacting unit is an intermediate transfer member which temporarily holds thereon a toner image formed on the image carrier by a developing agent carrier.

8. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus comprising:
an image carrier;

a developing device for developing an electrostatic latent image formed on the image carrier; and

an intermediate transfer member for abutting against the image carrier so as to temporarily hold thereon a toner image formed by being developed by the developing device, wherein

the developing device is comprised of a positioning member which abuts against the image carrier and exerts a force on the image carrier in a ~~, and a weight~~ direction ~~by the positioning member to the image carrier is located within~~ that intersects an abutting range between the intermediate transfer member and the image carrier.

9. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 8, wherein

the intermediate transfer member is made of an elastic belt, and abuts with respect to the image carrier under such a condition that the image carrier is wrapped only over a predetermined range by the intermediate transfer member.

10. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 9, wherein

the intermediate transfer member is followed by receiving driving force produced from the image carrier.

11. (Original) The image forming apparatus as claimed in claim 8, wherein

the developing device holds a plurality of developing agent carriers along a circumferential direction thereof, and is pivotally rotated in such a manner that a desirable developing agent carrier among the plural developing agent carriers is transported to a developing position located opposite to the image carrier.

12. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 11, wherein

the positioning member employed in the developing device is a tracking member capable of maintaining an interval between each of the developing agent carriers and the image carrier in a constant value.

13. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 8, wherein

the image carrier is a photosensitive drum having an axial center.

14. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus comprising:

an image carrier;

a developing device for developing an electrostatic latent image formed on the image carrier, and ~~being contacted to~~ that contacts the image carrier by a positioning member ~~in predetermined weight~~; and

an intermediate transfer member ~~which is contacted to~~ that contacts the image carrier ~~in predetermined weight~~ and holds thereon a toner image which has been developed to be formed by the developing device, wherein

~~the image forming apparatus includes such a portion that both a straight line and a weight direction of~~ the positioning member exerts a force on ~~with respect to~~ the image carrier in a direction through ~~become a substantially straight line, while the straight line connects~~ a contact point of the intermediate transfer member with ~~to~~ the image carrier, and through ~~to~~ a center of the image carrier.

15. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 14, wherein an eccentricity of the image carrier is suppressed by both the intermediate transfer member and the developing device.

16. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the intermediate transfer member is made of an elastic belt, and is contacted to the image carrier via either a line or a plane.

17. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the developing device is contacted to the image carrier at a preselected portion in order to keep a distance of a portion of the developing device located opposite to the image carrier constant.

18. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 17, wherein

the developing device is contacted to the image carrier at a non-image forming portion, and contacted toward a substantially center direction of the image carrier in predetermined weight.

19. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus comprising:

an electrostatic latent image forming unit for forming an electrostatic latent image on an image carrier;

a developing unit in which a plurality of developing rollers are provided along a circumferential direction thereof in order to develop the electrostatic latent image formed by the electrostatic latent image forming unit to thereby form a toner image, and a desirable developing roller is transported to a developing position located opposite to the image carrier; and

a transferring unit which abuts against the image carrier in a wrap shape, and temporarily holds thereon the toner image formed on the image carrier, wherein

an extension of a line which connects a center of the image carrier to a center of the desirable developing roller located opposite to the image carrier is positioned within a range where the transferring unit abuts against the image carrier in a wrap shape; and

wherein the developing unit employs a member capable of maintaining an interval between the developing roller and the image carrier in a constant value in correspondence with each of the developing rollers.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the member employed in the developing unit depresses the image carrier along a predetermined direction when positioning of the developing roller for executing the developing operation is carried out with respect to the image carrier.

22. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus comprising:

an electrostatic latent image forming unit for forming an electrostatic latent image on an image carrier;

a developing unit in which a plurality of developing agent carriers are provided along a circumferential direction thereof in order to develop the electrostatic latent image formed by the electrostatic latent image forming unit to thereby form a toner image, and a desirable developing agent carrier is pivotally rotated to a developing position located opposite to the image carrier; and

a transferring unit which abuts against the image carrier in a wrap shape, and temporarily holds thereon the toner image formed on the image carrier, wherein

in the developing unit, when the desirable developing agent carrier is pivotally rotated to the developing position, a predetermined member abuts against the image carrier and exerts a force on the image carrier in ~~via a predetermined trail; and~~ a direction that intersects ~~along which the predetermined member depresses the image carrier via the trail is located within~~ a range where the transferring unit abuts against the image carrier in the [[a]] wrap shape.

23. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 22, wherein

the predetermined member is a tracking roller which abuts against the image carrier within a non-developing range, and determines an interval between the image carrier and the developing agent carrier.

24. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 22, wherein

the predetermined member is provided in correspondence with all of the developing agent carriers provided in the developing unit; and when each of the developing agent carriers is located opposite to the image carrier, a direction along which the predetermined member depresses against the image carrier is located within the range where the transferring unit abuts against the image carrier in the wrap shape.

25. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus comprising:

an electrostatic latent image forming unit for forming an electrostatic latent image on an image carrier;

a developing unit in which a plurality of developing agent carriers are provided along a circumferential direction thereof in order to develop the electrostatic latent image formed by the electrostatic latent image forming unit to thereby form a toner image, and a desirable developing agent carrier is pivotally rotated to a developing position located opposite to the image carrier; and

a transferring unit which abuts against the image carrier in a wrap shape, and temporarily holds thereon the toner image formed on the image carrier, wherein

in the developing unit, when the desirable developing agent carrier is separated from the developing position, a predetermined member is separated from the image carrier along a line that intersects ~~via a predetermined trail; and a direction along which the predetermined member depresses the image carrier via the trail is located within~~ a range where the transferring unit abuts against the image carrier in a wrap shape.

26. (Currently Amended) A method of holding an image carrier comprising the steps of:

abutting a positioning member with respect to a pivotally rotated image carrier in ~~along~~ a predetermined direction through a center shaft of the image carrier so as to depress the image carrier;

depressing the image carrier via the [[a]] center shaft of the image carrier with a force in ~~predetermined weight along~~ a direction opposite to the predetermined direction; and

stably holding the image carrier based upon both the depression made in ~~along~~ the predetermined direction and the depression made in ~~along~~ the direction opposite to the predetermined direction.

27. (Original) The image carrier holding method according to claim 26, wherein

the depression along the predetermined direction is realized by abutting with respect to the image carrier from a circumferential portion of the image carrier in a wrap shape within a predetermined range so as to depress the image carrier.

28. (Original) The image carrier holding method according to claim 27, wherein the opposite direction corresponds to such a direction along which the depression is made from the circumferential portion toward the center shaft within a range at the circumferential portion of the image carrier, which is formed by an extension of such a straight line passing through the abutting range in the wrap shape and the center shaft.